



State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY
AND
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

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PRESS RELEASE

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STATE PREPARES FOR WINTER WEATHER

BATON ROUGE (January 5, 2010) – The Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP) will activate the GOHSEP Crisis Action Team (CAT) Wednesday morning to monitor and respond to winter weather hazards such as possible icy conditions projected across the state this week. GOHSEP is in contact with those parishes where sleet, snow, and potential icing of Louisiana roadways is forecasted in parts of the state.

"While we are anticipating some potentially dangerous winter weather, we urge everyone to pay attention to their local news and weather forecasts and avoid driving in icy conditions. If you haven't already done so, this is the time to have some extra supplies on hand in the event of a power outage due to icy conditions," says GOHSEP Director Mark Cooper. "Please prepare your homes, bring your pets inside and check on the elderly and disabled. Also, take special precaution when using space heaters. Keep combustibles at least three feet away from the heater."

GOHSEP is also coordinating efforts with other state agencies such as the Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH), Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD).

Department of Agriculture and Forestry:

- Issuing advisories for owners of livestock

Department of Health and Hospitals:

- Assessing the number of hospital beds available to prepare for cold-related injuries or illness

Department of Social Services:

- Working with the American Red Cross to establish warming centers. Warming centers are places people can go to get relief from the cold. They are not open 24

hours. Snacks, hot drinks, cots and blankets are provided at the warming center location.

- Reviewing which resources (cots, blankets, etc.) are available if needed by local parishes.

Department of Transportation and Development:

- Loading trucks with sand
- De-icing agents will be applied to bridges in affected areas
- Preparing barricades for possible road closures
- Motor Assistance Patrol (MAP) will operate 24 hours a day starting Thursday until road conditions improve
- Dial 511 for more information on road closures or go to www.dotd.la.gov and click on 511 for more information

Louisiana State Police:

- Working with DOTD and monitoring bridges and overpasses for icing
- Preparing to activate additional personnel as needed
- Dial *LSP (*577) to report any problems on the roads
- Go to www.lsp.org for road closures

State Fire Marshall:

- Emergency Response Team is preparing to assist local fire departments and any medical facilities that may lose utilities
- Issuing public advisories on fire/heat safety

The American Red Cross says each chapter is in communication with the parish Offices of Emergency Preparedness personnel and will continue to work closely with them to determine what resources are needed.

Any icing issues will mainly affect bridges and overpasses. For the latest information on local weather, residents should listen to their local weather forecast.

The GOHSEP will continue to participate in daily conference calls with the National Weather Service (NWS), state and local agencies as preparations for the possibly hazardous winter weather continues.

The entire state is expected to be impacted. The current weather forecasts call for rain to develop by late Wednesday and turn into freezing rain, sleet and snow by Thursday. Temperatures could dip into the teens.

The GOHSEP urges everyone to protect themselves and their homes from freezing temperatures. Winter weather and H1N1 public service announcements (PSAs) featuring professional golfer and Shreveport native David Toms recently started airing as well as other PSAs focusing on winter weather hazards. Those PSAs can be viewed on the GOHSEP websites www.gohsep.la.gov and www.getagameplan.org. That's also where you can find information on how to keep you and your family safe.

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